

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A network device, comprising:

5 a housing;

circuitry within the housing for multiplexing a communication of information between first, second and third communication devices, wherein the circuitry includes a first connection for connecting to the first communication device, a second connection for connecting to the second communication device, a third connection for connecting to the third communication 10 device, and a power connection for connecting the circuitry to an alternating current power source, and wherein the first, second and third communication devices are external to the housing;

15 a group of electrical prongs, mounted to the housing, for insertion into at least one primary receptacle of the alternating current power source, and for mechanically supporting at least a portion of the housing's weight when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted, wherein at least a portion of the group of electrical prongs is connected to the power connection for connecting the circuitry to the alternating current power source via the power connection and the group of 20 electrical prongs when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted;

a first extension receptacle, mounted to the housing and connected to the group of electrical prongs, into which a first plug of a first extension device is insertable, for connecting the first extension device to the alternating current power source via the first plug and the group of electrical prongs when the first plug and the group of electrical prongs are so inserted; and

25 a second extension receptacle, mounted to the housing and connected to the group of electrical prongs, into which a second plug of a second extension device is insertable, for connecting the second extension device to the alternating current power source via the second plug and the group of electrical prongs when the second plug and the group of electrical prongs are so inserted.

2. The network device of Claim 1, wherein the circuitry includes a power conditioning module for conditioning power from the alternating current power source, and wherein:

5 the power connection is for connecting the circuitry to the alternating current power source via the power connection, the power conditioning module, and the group of electrical prongs when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted;

the first extension receptacle is for connecting the first extension device to the alternating current power source via the first plug, the power conditioning module, and the group of electrical prongs when the first plug and the group of electrical prongs are so inserted; and

10 the second extension receptacle is for connecting the second extension device to the alternating current power source via the second plug, the power conditioning module, and the group of electrical prongs when the second plug and the group of electrical prongs are so inserted.

3. The network device of Claim 1, wherein the circuitry includes a surge protection module for protecting the circuitry against a surge in power from the alternating current power source, and wherein:

the power connection is for connecting the circuitry to the alternating current power source via the power connection, the surge protection module, and the group of electrical prongs when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted;

20 the first extension receptacle is for connecting the first extension device to the alternating current power source via the first plug, the surge protection module, and the group of electrical prongs when the first plug and the group of electrical prongs are so inserted; and

25 the second extension receptacle is for connecting the second extension device to the alternating current power source via the second plug, the surge protection module, and the group of electrical prongs when the second plug and the group of electrical prongs are so inserted.

4. The network device of Claim 1, wherein the group of electrical prongs includes:
a first group of electrical prongs, mounted to the housing, for insertion into a first primary
receptacle of the alternating current power source, and for mechanically supporting at least a
portion of the housing's weight when the first group of electrical prongs is so inserted, wherein
5 the first group of electrical prongs is connected to the power connection for connecting the
circuitry to the alternating current power source via the power connection and the first group of
electrical prongs when the first group of electrical prongs is so inserted, wherein the first
extension receptacle is connected to the first group of electrical prongs for connecting the first
extension device to the alternating current power source via the first plug and the first group of
10 electrical prongs when the first plug and the first group of electrical prongs are so inserted; and
a second group of electrical prongs, mounted to the housing, for insertion into a second
primary receptacle of the alternating current power source, and for mechanically supporting at
least a portion of the housing's weight when the second group of electrical prongs is so inserted,
wherein the second extension receptacle is connected to the second group of electrical prongs for
15 connecting the second extension device to the alternating current power source via the second
plug and the second group of electrical prongs when the second plug and the second group of
electrical prongs are so inserted.

5. The network device of Claim 4, wherein the circuitry includes a power
20 conditioning module for conditioning power from the alternating current power source, and
wherein:

the power connection is for connecting the circuitry to the alternating current power
source via the power connection, the power conditioning module, and the first group of electrical
prongs when the first group of electrical prongs is so inserted;
25 the first extension receptacle is for connecting the first extension device to the alternating
current power source via the first plug, the power conditioning module, and the first group of
electrical prongs when the first plug and the first group of electrical prongs are so inserted; and
the second extension receptacle is for connecting the second extension device to the
alternating current power source via the second plug, the power conditioning module, and the
30 second group of electrical prongs when the second plug and the second group of electrical prongs
are so inserted.

6. The network device of Claim 4, wherein the circuitry includes a surge protection module for protecting the circuitry against a surge in power from the alternating current power source, and wherein:

5 the power connection is for connecting the circuitry to the alternating current power source via the power connection, the surge protection module, and the first group of electrical prongs when the first group of electrical prongs is so inserted;

10 the first extension receptacle is for connecting the first extension device to the alternating current power source via the first plug, the surge protection module, and the first group of electrical prongs when the first plug and the first group of electrical prongs are so inserted; and

15 the second extension receptacle is for connecting the second extension device to the alternating current power source via the second plug, the surge protection module, and the second group of electrical prongs when the second plug and the second group of electrical prongs are so inserted.

15 7. The network device of Claim 1, wherein the circuitry is remotely controllable by the first communication device.

20 8. The network device of Claim 1, wherein the second connection is for connecting to the second communication device via a wireless medium.

25 9. The network device of Claim 8, wherein the circuitry includes:
circuitry for selecting a manner of communicating the information between the second connection and the second communication device via the wireless medium, including at least one of the following: wireless communication standard selection, mode selection, and channel selection.

10. The network device of Claim 9, wherein the circuitry is remotely controllable by the first communication device.

11. The network device of Claim 1, wherein the circuitry is mounted to the housing, and wherein the group of electrical prongs is mounted to the housing by mounting to the circuitry.
12. The network device of Claim 1, wherein the second communication device is the first extension device.
13. The network device of Claim 1, wherein the primary receptacle has a connector type, and wherein the first extension receptacle has the connector type.
14. The network device of Claim 1, wherein the primary receptacle is mounted within a wall and is exposed to an outer surface of the wall, and comprising:
a structure for securing the housing to the wall when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted.
15. The network device of Claim 14, wherein the structure includes a screw for securing the housing to the wall.
16. The network device of Claim 14, wherein the structure includes a locking device for selectively preventing detachment of the housing from the wall.
17. The network device of Claim 16, wherein the structure includes a screw for securing the housing to the wall, and wherein the locking device includes a cover for selectively preventing access to the screw.
18. The network device of Claim 14, wherein the structure is for securing the housing to the wall by securing the housing to the receptacle.

19. A network device, comprising:

a housing;

circuitry within the housing for communicating information between first and second communication devices, wherein the circuitry includes a first connection for connecting to the first communication device, a second connection for connecting to the second communication device, and a power connection for connecting the circuitry to an alternating current power source;

5 a group of electrical prongs, mounted to the housing, for insertion into at least one primary receptacle of the alternating current power source, and for mechanically supporting at least a portion of the housing's weight when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted, wherein at least a portion of the group of electrical prongs is connected to the power connection for connecting the circuitry to the alternating current power source via the power connection and the group of electrical prongs when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted; and

10 an extension receptacle, mounted to the housing and connected to the group of electrical prongs, into which a plug of an extension device is insertable, for connecting the extension device to the alternating current power source via the plug and the group of electrical prongs when the plug and the group of electrical prongs are so inserted.

20. The network device of Claim 19, wherein the extension receptacle is a first extension receptacle, wherein the extension device is a first extension device, wherein the plug is a first plug of the first extension device, and comprising:

20 a second extension receptacle, mounted to the housing and connected to the group of electrical prongs, into which a second plug of a second extension device is insertable, for connecting the second extension device to the alternating current power source via the second plug and the group of electrical prongs when the second plug and the group of electrical prongs are so inserted.

21. The network device of Claim 20, wherein the group of electrical prongs includes:
a first group of electrical prongs, mounted to the housing, for insertion into a first primary
receptacle of the alternating current power source, and for mechanically supporting at least a
portion of the housing's weight when the first group of electrical prongs is so inserted, wherein
5 the first group of electrical prongs is connected to the power connection for connecting the
circuitry to the alternating current power source via the power connection and the first group of
electrical prongs when the first group of electrical prongs is so inserted, wherein the first
extension receptacle is connected to the first group of electrical prongs for connecting the first
extension device to the alternating current power source via the first plug and the first group of
10 electrical prongs when the first plug and the first group of electrical prongs are so inserted; and
a second group of electrical prongs, mounted to the housing, for insertion into a second
primary receptacle of the alternating current power source, and for mechanically supporting at
least a portion of the housing's weight when the second group of electrical prongs is so inserted,
wherein the second extension receptacle is connected to the second group of electrical prongs for
15 connecting the second extension device to the alternating current power source via the second
plug and the second group of electrical prongs when the second plug and the second group of
electrical prongs are so inserted.

22. The network device of Claim 19, wherein the circuitry includes a power
20 conditioning module for conditioning power from the alternating current power source, and
wherein:
the power connection is for connecting the circuitry to the alternating current power
source via the power connection, the power conditioning module, and the group of electrical
prongs when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted; and
25 the extension receptacle is for connecting the extension device to the alternating current
power source via the plug, the power conditioning module, and the group of electrical prongs
when the plug and the group of electrical prongs are so inserted.

23. The network device of Claim 19, wherein the circuitry includes a surge protection module for protecting the circuitry against a surge in power from the alternating current power source, and wherein:

5 the power connection is for connecting the circuitry to the alternating current power source via the power connection, the surge protection module, and the group of electrical prongs when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted; and

the extension receptacle is for connecting the extension device to the alternating current power source via the plug, the surge protection module, and the group of electrical prongs when the plug and the group of electrical prongs are so inserted.

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24. The network device of Claim 19, wherein the circuitry is remotely controllable by the first communication device.

15 25. The network device of Claim 19, wherein the second connection is for connecting to the second communication device via a wireless medium.

26. The network device of Claim 25, wherein the circuitry includes:
circuitry for selecting a manner of communicating the information between the second connection and the second communication device via the wireless medium, including at least one 20 of the following: wireless communication standard selection, mode selection, and channel selection.

27. The network device of Claim 26, wherein the circuitry is remotely controllable by the first communication device.

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28. The network device of Claim 19, wherein the circuitry is mounted to the housing, and wherein the group of electrical prongs is mounted to the housing by mounting to the circuitry.

30 29. The network device of Claim 19, wherein the second communication device is the extension device.

30. The network device of Claim 19, wherein the primary receptacle has a connector type, and wherein the extension receptacle has the connector type.

31. The network device of Claim 19, wherein the primary receptacle is mounted within 5 a wall and is exposed to an outer surface of the wall, and comprising:

a structure for securing the housing to the wall when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted.

32. The network device of Claim 31, wherein the structure includes a screw for 10 securing the housing to the wall.

33. The network device of Claim 31, wherein the structure includes a locking device for selectively preventing detachment of the housing from the wall.

15 34. The network device of Claim 33, wherein the structure includes a screw for securing the housing to the wall, and wherein the locking device includes a cover for selectively preventing access to the screw.

35. The network device of Claim 31, wherein the structure is for securing the housing 20 to the wall by securing the housing to the receptacle.

36. The network device of Claim 19, wherein the first and second communication devices are external to the housing.

37. A network device, comprising:
a housing;
circuitry within the housing for communicating information between first and second
communication devices, wherein the circuitry includes a first connection for connecting to the
5 first communication device via a wire, a second connection for connecting to the second
communication device, and a power connection for connecting the circuitry to an alternating
current power source; and
a group of electrical prongs, mounted to the housing, for insertion into at least one
receptacle of the alternating current power source, and for mechanically supporting at least a
10 portion of the housing's weight when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted, wherein at least
a portion of the group of electrical prongs is connected to the power connection for connecting the
circuitry to the alternating current power source via the power connection and the group of
electrical prongs when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted.

15 38. The network device of Claim 37, wherein the circuitry is remotely controllable by
the first communication device.

39. The network device of Claim 37, wherein the second connection is for connecting
to the second communication device via a wireless medium.

20 40. The network device of Claim 39, wherein the circuitry includes:
circuitry for selecting a manner of communicating the information between the second
connection and the second communication device via the wireless medium, including at least one
of the following: wireless communication standard selection, mode selection, and channel
25 selection.

41. The network device of Claim 40, wherein the circuitry is remotely controllable by
the first communication device.

30 42. The network device of Claim 37, wherein the circuitry is mounted to the housing,
and wherein the group of electrical prongs is mounted to the housing by mounting to the circuitry.

43. The network device of Claim 37, wherein the primary receptacle is mounted within a wall and is exposed to an outer surface of the wall, and comprising:

5 a structure for securing the housing to the wall when the group of electrical prongs is so inserted.

44. The network device of Claim 43, wherein the structure includes a screw for securing the housing to the wall.

10 45. The network device of Claim 43, wherein the structure includes a locking device for selectively preventing detachment of the housing from the wall.

15 46. The network device of Claim 45, wherein the structure includes a screw for securing the housing to the wall, and wherein the locking device includes a cover for selectively preventing access to the screw.

47. The network device of Claim 43, wherein the structure is for securing the housing to the wall by securing the housing to the receptacle.

20 48. The network device of Claim 37, wherein the first and second communication devices are external to the housing.

49. The network device of Claim 37, wherein the second connection is a parallel connection.

25 50. The network device of Claim 37, wherein the second connection is a serial connection

30 51. The network device of Claim 50, wherein the serial connection is a universal serial bus ("USB") connection.

52. The network device of Claim 37, wherein the wire is a first wire, and wherein the second connection is for connecting to the second communication device via a second wire.

5 53. The network device of Claim 37, wherein the second connection is an Ethernet connection.

54. The network device of Claim 37, wherein the second connections is a connection to a wide area network.

10 55. The network device of Claim 54, wherein the wide area network is a global computer network.

56. The network device of Claim 37, wherein the second connections is a connection to a print device.

15 57. The network device of Claim 56, wherein the connection to the print device is a connection to the print device via a print server.

58. The network device of Claim 37, wherein the receptacle is a primary receptacle, 20 and comprising:

an extension receptacle, mounted to the housing and connected to the group of electrical prongs, into which a plug of an extension device is insertable, for connecting the extension device to the alternating current power source via the plug and the group of electrical prongs when the plug and the group of electrical prongs are so inserted.

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